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T.B.

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/464,582 12/16/99 LAURITZEN

N PPC-694

EXAMINER

QM22/0425

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KIDWELL, M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3761

DATE MAILED:

04/25/01

5

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/464,582

Applicant(s)

LAURITZEN, NELS

Examiner

Michele M. Kidwell

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12/16/99.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 10 - 12 and 18 - 20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 13-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1–9 and 13–17, drawn to an integral disposable absorbent garment, classified in class 604, subclass 402.
- II. Claims 10–12, drawn to a method of applying an absorbent garment about a human lower torso, classified in class 604, subclass 317.
- III. Claims 18–20, drawn to a method of applying an absorbent undergarment about a human lower torso, classified in class 604, subclass 317.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I, II and III are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case the product as claimed may be used without releasably attaching the suspension belt distal end to the belt and/or without orienting the first belt end toward the anterior portions of the torso while releasably attaching to the second belt end thereto.

During a telephone conversation with Joel Rothfus on April 6, 2001, a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1–9 and

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13–17. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 10–12 and 18–20 withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Please note the initial restriction requirement stated claims 1–9 as group I and claims 13–17 as group III. After further claim review, the examiner has decided to include all apparatus claims in group I because claims 13–17 do not represent a patentably distinct species.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1–9 and 13–17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamamoto et al. (US 5,607,416).

With respect to claim 1, Yamamoto et al. (hereinafter “Yamamoto”) discloses an integral disposable absorbent garment that may be worn about a human lower torso comprising a suspension sling for absorbing and containing body exudates (1) having longitudinally extending suspension sling side margins, a suspension sling distal end and a suspension sling proximal end (figure 4) wherein the suspension sling is suspendable in a wearer’s crotch region (col. 5, lines 32–35) and a waist belt (2) capable

of encircling a user's waist with the suspension sling suspended in the wearer's crotch region as set forth in col. 5, lines 21–35.

As to claim 2, Yamamoto discloses a suspension sling comprising a liquid permeable topsheet, liquid impermeable backsheet associated with the topsheet and an absorbent structure positioned between the topsheet and the backsheet as set forth in col. 3, lines 30–33.

With regard to claims 3 and 4, Yamamoto discloses a garment wherein the suspension sling further comprises an elastic element disposed in at least one suspension sling side margin as set forth in col. 3, lines 51–61 and in figure 1.

As to claim 5, Yamamoto discloses the garment wherein the waist belt is elastically contractible as set forth in col. 4, lines 24–40.

With reference to claims 6–8, Yamamoto discloses the garment further comprising a waist belt attachment system as a pressure sensitive adhesive and a mechanical fastener as set forth in col. 4, lines 40–50.

As to claim 9, Yamamoto discloses the garment wherein the suspension sling distal end further comprises suspension sling fasteners as set forth in figure 1.

With respect to claim 13, Yamamoto discloses an absorbent garment that may be worn about a human lower torso comprising a waist belt having a first and second belt end (figure 3) with a first sling attachment location proximate the first belt end and a second sling attachment location disposed between the first and second belt ends (figure 1) and a disposable suspension sling for absorbing and containing body exudates (1) having longitudinally extending suspension sling side margins, a

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(figure 1) and a disposable suspension sling for absorbing and containing body exudates (1) having longitudinally extending suspension sling side margins, a suspension sling distal end and a suspension sling proximal end (figure 4) wherein the suspension sling is attachable to the first and second sling attachment locations of the belt in a manner to suspend the suspension sling in a wearer's crotch (figure 1) and the waist belt (2) is capable of encircling a user's waist with the suspension sling suspended in the wearer's crotch region as set forth in col. 5, lines 21 – 35.

Regarding claim 14, Yamamoto discloses a garment wherein the second sling attachment location is disposed approximately midway between the first and second belt ends as set forth in figure 1.

As to claim 15, Yamamoto discloses a garment wherein the waist belt and suspension sling comprise a belt closure system as set forth in col. 4, lines 40 – 50.

With reference to claim 16, Yamamoto discloses a garment wherein the belt closure system comprises closure system elements (col. 3, lines 30 – 38) at least at the first and second sling attachment locations and proximate the suspension sling distal and proximal ends (figure 1).

With respect to claim 17, Yamamoto discloses a garment wherein closure system elements join the first sling attachment location to the suspension sling proximal end as set forth in col. 3, lines 30 – 38 and in figure 1.

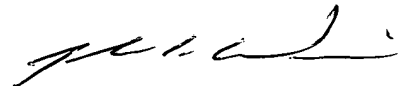
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michele M. Kidwell whose telephone number is 703-305-2941. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 7:00am - 3:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John G. Weiss can be reached on 703-308-2702. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3590 for regular communications and 703-305-3590 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to Monica Graves, Patent Analyst, whose telephone number is 703-305-3002.

Michele Kidwell

Michele Kidwell
April 20, 2001



John G. Weiss
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3700